

12 September, 2011

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **United Nations Development Programme Expands Yasuní-ITT Donor Initiative to Prevent Oil Drilling in Ecuadorian Amazon**

*Global supporters can now make small contributions to help preserve one of earth's most biodiverse spots – a potential treasure trove of undiscovered scientific and medical discoveries*

New York, NY (12 September, 2011) – With only four months remaining to raise \$100 million, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) announced today that it is now accepting donations of all sizes to its trust fund to preserve in perpetuity a vital section of Ecuador's Yasuní National Park in the Amazon Rainforest, under which lie nearly 1 billion barrels of oil. The effort, part of Ecuador's Yasuní-ITT Initiative, seeks to channel global support to save this unique piece of land that could hold the key to untold medical and scientific discoveries. Donations can be made at [www.yasunisupport.org](http://www.yasunisupport.org).

The Yasuní-ITT Initiative, a plan put forth by the Government of Ecuador and officially supported by the UNDP, seeks to raise a total of \$100 million by the end of December. The Initiative was previously only open to governments and corporations pledging over \$100,000. Now, individuals and businesses wishing to contribute amounts as small as \$25 may become involved in this historic and unprecedented environmental endeavor to save one of the most biodiverse places in the world.

Actress Bo Derek, Goodwill Ambassador appointed by President Correa to the Yasuní-ITT Initiative, commented, "Extending this effort to private citizens who want to get involved at any level not only helps raise more money to protect this sacred land, but also raises awareness of how important Yasuni is to our world. People care deeply about the protection of Yasuní, and want to contribute whatever they can. Ultimately, increased small-donation participation helps us galvanize support and spread the word."

After 846 million barrels of crude oil were discovered underneath the Yasuní's Ishpingo-Tambococha-Tiputini (ITT) oil fields, immense internal and external pressure was laid on the Ecuadorian government to commence extraction and exportation. In a country where a third of the population lives beneath the poverty line and oil easily accounts for a majority of export revenue, the \$7.2 billion worth of oil under Yasuní represents a financial lifeline for the developing nation. The people and government of Ecuador, however, prefer not to drill.

Proposing an alternative plan in 2006, Ecuador chose to forego half of the estimated \$7.2 billion in revenue and is instead appealing to the international community at large to help recoup the other half of the lost potential profits that selling the oil would bring in. Agreeing with the plan and partnering with Ecuador in 2010, the UNDP established a trust fund through which to administer fundraising. The raised funds will go towards investment in alternative energy, the objective being a complete overhaul of the

country's energy matrix away from oil dependence. Funds will also go towards social programs in Ecuador and building infrastructure such as hospitals and schools.

Bisrat Aklilu, Head of the UNDP Multi-Partner Trust Fund Office, explained, "This project is one of a kind. The UNDP thought it deserved our full support, and by partnering with the government of Ecuador, we will be to ensure the funds are administered properly. The UNDP will also help guarantee reimbursement of funds in the event that Ecuador is forced to drill."

Recognized as one of the most biodiverse places on earth, Yasuní has a rich history of animal and environmental wealth. One of the only sections of the Amazon where life was virtually unaffected by the last Ice Age, Yasuní provides a unique look into just how far millennia of evolution and ecological cohabitation have brought us. Teeming with unparalleled levels of amphibian, bird, mammal, insect, and plant life, in addition to indigenous tribes living in voluntary seclusion, it is one of the world's most pristine reserves, and could hold untold medical and scientific discoveries. One hectare of land there contains more species of tree than in all of North America.

"Our country is beautiful, but many people are poor. They depend on oil money, but at the same time they don't want to harm their beloved nature," said Ivonne Baki, Chair of the Yasuní-ITT Commission and former Ecuadorian Ambassador to the United States. "We now need the support of all people around the world to stand up and do their part to help protect this treasure before it is too late."

Drilling for the oil in Yasuní would cause untold damage to the environment and the myriad species of life found there. It would release over 400 million metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions into the atmosphere, significantly contributing to global warming. The associated deforestation and oil infrastructure alone would contribute another staggering 800 million metric tons of carbon emissions.

Meeting the fundraising goal of \$100 million by the end of the year will indicate whether or not the project is viable and if the international community is vested enough in preserving this untouched ecosystem. Originally appealing to foreign governments and international corporations pledging \$100,000 or more, the project is now accepting donations of all sizes in an effort to reach as many contributors as possible.

Visit <http://www.yasunisupport.org> for more information and to contribute.

###

These materials are distributed by Brown Lloyd James on behalf of the Yasuni-ITT Initiative. Additional information is available on file with the Department of Justice, Washington, DC.





REPUBLICA DEL ECUADOR



NACIONES UNIDAS

14 September, 2011

[NAME]:

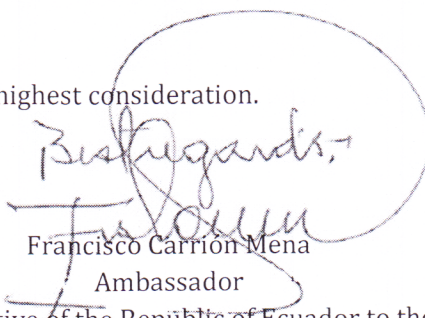
I have the honor to inform you that on Friday, September 23, 2011, at the United Nations Headquarters in New York, there will be a High Level meeting on the Yasuní-ITT Initiative hosted jointly by the Constitutional President of the Republic of Ecuador, Mr. Rafael Correa Delgado, and the Secretary General of the United Nations, Mr. Ban Ki-Moon. Heads of States and Governments of UN Member States have been invited to this High Level event taking place from 17:00 to 18:00 in Conference Room 5.

Considering your interest in environmental issues and your commitment to biodiversity conservation, I am honored to invite you to attend this important event and hope we can count on your participation and support.

The Yasuní National Park, recognized by UNESCO as a Biosphere Reserve, covers an area of over one million acres of rainforest exceptionally rich in biodiversity, hosting indigenous peoples in voluntary isolation as well as their ancestral land. World leaders, governments, multilateral agencies and scientists are calling upon the international community to ensure the conservation of the mega diverse site, to protect the culture and livelihood of indigenous peoples in the region, and to contribute to the fight against climate change by avoiding carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions from deforestation, exploitation, and use of the oil that lies beneath the Yasuní National Park.

In August 2010, the Government of Ecuador and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) created a Trust Fund in order to collect and manage contributions, ensuring transparency and accountability to interested contributors. The Fund will support a strong program of renewable energy, combat deforestation and climate change, and promote conservation of ecosystems and social development.

Please accept the assurances of my highest consideration.

  
Francisco Carrion Mena  
Ambassador

Permanent Representative of the Republic of Ecuador to the United Nations